

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The office action of October 13, 2006 has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-15, 17-29, and 31-35 remain pending in this application. Claims 16 and 30 have been canceled.

Preliminarily, applicants wish to note with appreciation the indication that the application contains allowable subject matter. Namely, claims 31-35 have been allowed and claims 16 and 30 have been objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, but would be allowed if amended to incorporate the features of their respective base claims. Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 17 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 16 and 30, respectively, to place claims 1 and 17 in allowable form in order to obtain prompt allowance. As such, claims 2-15, which ultimately depend from claim 1, and claims 18-29 and 31, which ultimately depend from claim 17, are also in condition for allowance.

Claims 17-22, 24-26, 29 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 6,694,306 to Nishizawa et al. (“Nishizawa”). Claims 23, 27 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishizawa. Claims 1-15 have rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent no. 6,363,398 to “Andersen”. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. Notwithstanding the merits of these rejections, applicants have amended claims 1 and 17 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 16 and 30 and reserve the right to pursue the broader subject matter in a continuation application. Accordingly, these rejections are moot.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that no fee is required for this submission. If any fees are required or if an overpayment is made, the Commissioner is authorized to debit or credit our Deposit Account No. 19-0733, accordingly.

All rejections having been addressed, applicants' respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicit prompt notification of the same.

Respectfully submitted,
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